

Nation's third highest in Thornhill

Local means to cheaper houses

Perish the thought, but higher taxes on housing may have some good points.

Latest comparison house prices by Royal Trust Company show Thornhill house prices the third highest in the

Bayview Fairways has good reason for its complaint

Residents in the Bayview Fairways subdivision area of Thornhill have borne more than their share of the brunt of local development pains.

It is enough to say there has been a long list of unfortunate and lingering problems which were supposed to be temporary but have lingered and lingered. No need to detail them.

The people there had every right to expect their special concept public elementary school would be put back in order this year when the many portables emptied into the new German Mills school.

Now the portables are to be filled again from another new adjacent development. Several other similar new projects are possible in the area, and the undesirable school condition appears well on the way to being relatively permanent.

The ratepayers have every right to complain, as they have.

The public school board should consider some different solution, such as the completely independent portable school arrangement the Roman Catholic separate school board utilized until its German Mills school was built.

Single municipality requires new attitude

The hair must have really risen on the scalps of many local politicians last week when two of their most prominent fellows came right slambang out and predicted there will be a single municipal government here in York Region.

It is hard to tell why York Regional Chairman Garfield Wright and Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Gordon Ratcliffe should come out with such a surprise statement at this time.

There seemed to be no particular occasion or set of circumstances to give rise to such a move.

No doubt the public at large was just as surprised and unaware of Ratcliffe's and Wright's reasons.

The idea of forming single, large and powerful municipalities long has frightened to death most of the politicians at both provincial and local levels here in Ontario.

The thorn has not been grasped. The Toronto area was the first in the province where necessity forced the creation of a larger area authority.

But this came in the form of a compromise metropolitan federation.

Metro was a great success because it better filled the need. But it was never proven a single, larger city government couldn't have done it better.

The degree of success Metro achieved then led to formation of more Ontario municipal federations

Metro teachers can hardly be serious

(A Guest Editorial From The Mirror of Don Mills)

Metro high school teachers have seriously damaged their credibility by asking for salary increases ranging between 37 and 75 per cent during the opening round of negotiations for a 1975-76 contract.

Although spokesmen will not comment on the percentages contained in an initial draft proposal distributed to teachers by negotiators and not meant to be released, it is assumed a settlement lower than the extraordinary one reached in Ottawa last month will not be accepted.

Salaries there rose, retroactive to January, to \$10,000 from \$7,200, for a first-year teacher with a university degree, and to \$21,900, from \$18,535, for a teacher with 14 years' experience and an honors degree.

Current Metro salaries at these minimum and maximum levels are

nation and Richmond Hill prices close behind.

On the other hand, many Montreal suburban houses are among the country's cheapest, away at the bottom of the list.

Thornhill three-bedroom brick bungalows five to eight years old list at an average of \$70,000 with taxes of \$750, in comparison to Laval's figures of \$30,000 and \$1,000.

For Richmond Hill it was \$59,000 and \$540 respectively.

For the two-storey four-bedroom home five to eight years old, the Thornhill price is \$95,000 with \$940 taxes. In Longueuil the figures are \$59,000 and \$1,300.

Again for Richmond Hill the figures are \$90,000 and \$850.

It is interesting to note the cheap Montreal suburban housing seems to be in municipalities where subdivision and lot services are financed by local government and recovered through tax levy.

Whether correct or not, the conclusion to be drawn is that municipalities can provide and finance services much more cheaply than can developers and property owners.

It is usually the practice here to follow the more expensive route, with services in the end financed by individual property owners through high interest mortgages.

On the face of it, there seems good reason for our municipalities to consider assumption of responsibility for subdivision services.

No doubt the matter is complicated and there may be counter arguments not immediately evident.

But if lower cost housing for our citizens is truly the goal of our local councils, they should take a hard look at the question.

in the form of more metros and more regions like ours here in York.

There can be no doubt the metro or regional federal solution is more confusing, more complex and less direct than a single large municipality would be. Critics of the metro-regional solution see many weaknesses and drawbacks.

It is doubtless true that municipal federations have come about for political reasons, not because they are better in an economic and organizational way.

The only province which has taken the option of forming large single municipalities on a major scale is Alberta. There the cities of Edmonton and Calgary each govern hundreds of square miles within single municipalities and are continually being enlarged as the province feels necessary.

There are a good many experienced students of local government who strongly support the idea of single, large municipalities as by far the best solution.

They cite the success of Edmonton and Calgary as proof they are right.

Ratcliffe and Wright have good grounds for the position they have taken.

But even given that they are right, and they probably are, it would take a complete change of public and provincial government attitude here to bring back simple single-tier local government.

\$7,800 and \$18,400. The average salary is \$16,100.

Spokesmen won't say they will refuse to settle for less than Ottawa teachers, but figures in newsletters citing higher housing and other costs of living increases in Metro make it seem highly unlikely.

Teachers should certainly be given a large-enough raise to keep up with inflation and, since they haven't had a new contract for two years, a substantial increase is necessary.

But to ask for even 50 per cent is sure to irritate, at the least, the average taxpayer who is himself falling steadily behind.

And the demands don't do much to promote an image of willingness to bargain in good faith.

School board chairmen in Metro have not yet made an offer and teachers have not threatened any militant action but, with the spectre of the two-month Ottawa strike not yet gone, only reason on both sides will safeguard the interests of students.

The following is a statement by Cartoonist John Styga, following the immediate and vehement reaction to his cartoon in last week's issue of The Liberal: Astonished, surprised, speechless, shocked — any of these words could have described me Thursday afternoon when I received initial reports of the reaction of Lake Wilcox residents to my editorial cartoon.

Bad taste, horrible, unfair, worst I have ever seen, were the words of two Lake Wilcox people — Bill Good Senior and Marj Lyons.

As the conversation with them continued, I learned that the history of this area is anything but pleasant.

Injustices seeded by various governing bodies plus descriptive slurs by unthinking people in referring to the residents as swampers, welfare bums, etc., have left visible scars.

For this, I'm sorry. I was also told these injustices have lasted far too long. For this, I'm sorry.

Some doubt was also expressed as to how much, if any, of the \$1 million available under the Neighborhood Improvement Plan will actually reach the area.

It's clear this sensitivity of the people has reached an acute and frightening level. I'm sorry.

It seems regardless of the subject matter I might have chosen in respect to this area, the reaction would have been one of anger.

This festering wound was unintentionally opened by the cartoon. For this, I'm sorry.

Obviously you have looked at the cartoon through glasses scarred by many hurts and saw more than a remark related to the improvement opportunity in the form of the NIP program.

I am not responsible for your past, but now I sympathize with you.

Make this unfortunate error on my part work for your benefit, and if in the midst of your fight you find a related joke or cartoon that brings laughter, it will be a sure sign that you have realized some measure of victory.

I sign my work, not for reasons of ego, but because I believe in man's desire for goodness and truth, to which I dare hope my work may contribute in some small way.

I'll be cheering for you.

JOHN STYGA,
83 Hill Drive,
Aurora, Ont.



Regional Councillor Rowe shocked by editorial cartoon

Dear Editor,

While reading the Wednesday, May 14, issue of the Liberal I was literally "shocked" to note the Editorial Cartoon.

As an elected official of Richmond Hill, I was always quick to point out the fairness and impartiality of your newspaper in dealing with local issues and in particular your kind treatment toward me during my 10 years in public life.

Surely someone on staff went beyond the boundaries of "good taste" in allowing this type of "callous humor" to be published.

Over the years I have become personally acquainted with the majority of residents both at Lake Wilcox and Oak Ridges and many are personal

friends.

It must be remembered these people did not request amalgamation with Richmond Hill, but through no choice of their own were forced into this union through Bill 180 which created regional government.

Politicians for the past five years have tried to assist this transition, but such a cartoon does nothing to smooth already disturbed waters.

Cartoon in poor taste

Dear Editor: The cartoon on the editorial page of last week's Liberal was unjustified and in very poor taste. For a paper with a recent

record of trying to improve community relations, it's quite a setback.

DAVID SCHILLER,
Mayor, Richmond Hill.

Went working for a long time on a study of the entire Lake Wilcox area.

It will hopefully be a success mainly because of the active participation and leadership provided by dedicated residents who have their homes in the study area.

When you have an opportunity Mr. Editor to study the report and its recommendations, you will see the lack of services

suffered by these people makes the suggestiveness of the cartoon all the more "cruel".

You realize many of these people have lived many years in — and have contributed to — the community.

And yet as taxpayers they have not enjoyed many of the services that so many of us take for granted.

No doubt, Mr. Editor, your paper will direct an apology to these people and it is my

hope it will be directed in such a fashion to mend a definite breach in community relations, a breach we can ill afford in any section of Richmond Hill.

These are difficult times and we need the whole six Wards in Richmond Hill working in unison for the betterment of the town and the Region of York.

GORDON L. ROWE,
Regional Councillor,
Town of Richmond Hill.

Farmhouse haunted after 1887 Kinnear murders

YESTERDAYS..

Richmond Hill's historian-harnessmaker of the 1890's, William Harrison, commenting on The Liberal's report on the Kinnear Murders wrote to the editor in 1887 to say that at the time of the murders (1843) he was living with his parents almost across the road from the scene of the double tragedy and had known the victims and the murderers.

For years the blood stains of the victims remained on the floor, he said.

Like many other houses under similar circumstances, the residence soon became known as "the haunted house", and stories of groans and hideous noises were circulated widely.

"We were told that sometimes the whole building would shake, that boots hung on the wall would rock to and fro, and that dishes would dance on the cupboard shelves, so that the small boy and some bigger ones, felt rather timid in passing or visiting the place at night.

"The whole mystery, however, was afterwards explained by the fact those who occupied the premises were living rent free, and were not anxious for a change, so every other would-be tenant was discouraged with these stories.

"All the ghosts, however, vanished when the one family moved out," Mr. Harrison recalled.

A week later, a letter writer from Toronto, who signed his letter "Ziz", reported he was born on the Kinnear farm a few years after the murder.

"Our neighbors often enquired if we did not hear noises at night," he recalled.

The family did indeed hear noises in the dead stillness of the hours of darkness.

In one instance there was a terrifying noise heard coming from the garret.

The noise seemed as if some creature of ghostlike footfalls was running from end to end of the garret dragging a huge chain.

The whole household was alarmed. The younger members of the family, of course, knew it was the ghost of either Kinnear or Nancy Montgomery — the older members probably thought so too, but appeared to treat such childish fancies with scorn.

When morning came the men went up

into the garret with quaking hearts and found the cause of the midnight fears.

A large rat had been caught by one of his hind legs in a steel trap with an iron chain.

He'd made vain attempts through the night to extricate himself by making frantic journeys from end to end of the garret, hopping from joist to joist and carrying the trap with him.

The chain at each bound dropped on to the lath and plaster between the joists.

From that morning on nobody in the family believed the house was haunted, even when a north or west wind blew through the grove of second-growth pines at the rear of the house, causing them to toss to and fro and creak and moan and shake their cones on to the roof of the house to rattle down the shingles.

Ziz suggested the explanation for most "haunted" houses could be explained as easily as the "haunting" of the Kinnear house in north Richmond Hill.

Viewpoint from the regional desk



BY JIM IRVING

The school system hereabouts is being assailed these days by large groups of parents, all eager to see that French is taught in the schools at an early age, before the boys start looking too closely at the girls and the latter start pretending too hard not to notice.

This is a bilingual country, the advocates all say. And a person will be handicapped when he reached adulthood and can only mumble in one language.

So let's start giving the kids French tout de suite and keep it up until they finally graduate and go out into the world to organize protest movements, or write songs of love in which they chronologically list all the things they find difficult to live with.

All right, let's start making French mandatory at kindergarten, or junior kindergarten, or nursery school; or maybe the doctor could even intone a few French phrases during delivery.

But let's do something soon about getting this other language in our midst. We need it. We need to learn a new language, because we're obviously having a hard time with English.

You don't have a degree in English to know when a word is being battered about, just as you don't have to be a symphony con-

ductor to know when a person is singing off key.

But just the same there must be many tone-deaf people around, and they all seem to have a chosen politics to show how good they are at latching on to all that's trite — but fashionable, of course — in the language of the day.

For example: no one ever replies to anything anymore; one responds.

Now reply is a perfectly good word, but it obviously is too easy, it doesn't smack of erudition, as respond apparently does.

Or take learning experience — and the farther the better. No child goes to school to get educated anymore, he or she goes for a learning experience.

"And did you have a good learning experience today, son?"

"Huh?"

And funding, or funded. Nothing is financed now, it's funded. A council or a board seeks funding. Funded is the opposite of floating, which itself means not permanently invested.

So maybe what our political organizations have in mind all the time when they seek funding, is approval to sink.

And how about hopefully? That keeps many a politician on his feet long after his three minutes are up.

"Hopefully," he'll say, "the town of Whitchurch - Stouffville won't

become a landing field for the new airport." When all he has to say is: "I hope", etc. etc.

Because hopefully is an adverb, just as meaningful is an adjective, one waits hopefully or sits in one's chair rocking hopefully. One doesn't hopefully do anything.

But that word is at the forefront of every sentence uttered anymore.

And then there's ongoing. During the last election, one of our successful mayoralty candidates, calling for informal meetings during the year to let the public air its views, had this to say: "These bear-pit sessions could fill in what I perceive is a feedback gap on an ongoing basis".

Ouch.

Edwin Newman, an NBC commentator, in his new book, "Strictly Speaking", which was reviewed recently in a Toronto paper, laments the "poor state of our language in the U.S." And he hints that it could be to blame for much of the trouble there.

Just as it could be to blame for much of the trouble here. Or doesn't anybody care? Are they all prepared to just jump in and latch on to the first cliché that comes by, because some disc jockey, or sportscaster, or senate investigator, used it five minutes earlier?

Don't any of these words grate on

people's ears? And grate enough that, while wincing at their sound, they might also check the dictionary to see if what they feel is true — the words are being misused.

There are some fine speakers in the political field; even some great ones. Donald Sim, for example, the chairman of York County Board of Education, is as articulate and eloquent and as easy to listen to as anyone around. But no one expects everyone else to speak like Churchill, or even to find the task all that easy.

It isn't. But the quick acceptance of every bad word or phrase that comes down the pike, makes one wonder if these people use them because they think they're right — they're current and choice, so they must be. Or if they use them because they think the rest of us slob speak that way.

So by speaking the same way, they are employing the common touch. Well the common touch comes from using words that come naturally, not from repeating the hackneyed offerings of those around you.

And the common touch — which is really anything but — contrary to what the politicians might think, elevates, it doesn't lower. N'est-ce pas?

Letters